

**September 1, 2026
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**BACKGROUNDERS
for CanTalk media release**

Export diversification and language support

Canada is prioritizing non-U.S. markets

The 2026–27 CanExport SMEs program states that it is placing a “stronger emphasis” on non-U.S. markets in support of Canada’s objective of doubling non-U.S. exports over the next decade.

Export Development Canada’s Winter 2026 Trade Confidence Index found:

- 65% of Canadian exporters plan to enter new markets within two years
- The share of companies beginning their export journey exclusively in the U.S. fell from 62% in 2015 to 34% in 2025.
- The share beginning in multiple markets increased from 13% to 43%.

Sources: Government of Canada, CanExport SMEs Applicant Guide 2026–27; Export Development Canada, Winter 2026 Trade Confidence Index

CanExport already recognizes interpretation

CanExport SMEs currently recognizes professional interpretation as an eligible international business-development expense.

- Category D of the Applicant Guide refers specifically to interpreters facilitating “in-person interactions with key contacts” in target markets.
- CanExport also recognizes translation of sales contracts, distribution agreements, non-disclosure agreements and other documents required to enter foreign markets.
- CanTalk is proposing the existing interpretation category explicitly include real-time telephone and video interpretation before, during and after international market-development activity.

Source: Government of Canada, CanExport SMEs Applicant Guide 2026–27

Research links language and international trade

A meta-analysis by economists Peter Egger and Andrea Lassmann reviewed 701 estimates from 81 academic studies and found:

- Sharing a common official or spoken language was associated, on average, with a 44% higher bilateral trade flows.

Source: Peter H. Egger and Andrea Lassmann, “The Language Effect in International Trade: A Meta-Analysis,” Economics Letters, 2012

A separate study covering 195 countries found that ease of communication has a distinct effect:

- On international trade and identified translation and interpreters as significant contributors to that communication.

Source: Jacques Melitz and Farid Toubal, “Native Language, Spoken Language, Translation and Trade,” Journal of International Economics, 2014

Language and culture reduce market barriers

Global Affairs Canada's State of Trade 2026 reports:

- International networks, market knowledge, and cultural and linguistic familiarity can reduce information barriers and facilitate access to foreign markets.
- The report notes that these factors are particularly important in services, where trust and communication are central to business relationships.

Source: Global Affairs Canada, State of Trade 2026

Current federal diversification support

The Government of Canada announced \$7.5 billion in new and enhanced tariff-response measures in August 2026, including:

- \$2 billion for the Canada Strong Diversification Fund.
- \$1.5 billion in additional Regional Tariff Response Initiative funding.
- Expanded financing and liquidity support for Canadian businesses.
- Export Development Canada also expanded its Trade Impact Program on August 27 to reach more SMEs affected by U.S. tariffs and support diversification into new markets.

Sources: Government of Canada; Export Development Canada.

Policy question

CanExport already recognizes professional interpretation as part of international market development.

CanTalk is asking:

- Why should interpretation be recognized when an interpreter is physically present at an overseas meeting, but not explicitly recognized for the discovery calls, virtual meetings and follow-up conversations that increasingly take place before and after the trade mission?

About CanTalk

CanTalk is a Canadian-owned language-service company headquartered in Winnipeg, Manitoba, providing 24/7 professional human interpretation through more than 2,000 interpreters supporting more than 220 languages and dialects, with toll-free access from 40 countries and a predominately Canadian-based interpreter network within a protected Canadian environment.

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